

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please Amend the claims to read as follows. The following is a complete listing of all claims, and replaces any prior listings:

1. – 16. (Cancelled)

17. (Currently amended) A catheter for use in performing a medical procedure comprising:

an elongated tubular structure having a proximal end and a distal end;
said tubular structure being a size of no greater than about 4 French;
said tubular structure enabling fluid flow rates in a range of approximately 0 to 40 ml/sec
without failure of said tubular structure; and

said distal end of said catheter tubular structure having, on a tip section, an elastic restrictor
that, when operable, changes in size in response to a change in fluid flow through the
tubular structure to provide a variable amount of fluid force restriction, said distal end of
said tubular structure further having and a plurality of openings arranged such that forces
resulting from said fluid flow out of said openings and out of said elastic restrictor are
substantially balanced during performance of said medical procedure.

18. (Original) The catheter of claim 17 wherein said distal end of said catheter is made of a material that is softer than a material of said proximal end.

19. (Original) The catheter of claim 17 wherein said restrictor comprises a diameter of approximately 0.305 mm.

20. (Original) The catheter of claim 17 wherein each of said openings is approximately 1.22 mm in length 0.33 mm in diameter.

21. – 35. (Cancelled)

36. (Currently amended) A catheter assembly comprising:

 a hub section located at a proximal end of said catheter;

 a shaft section attached to a distal end of said hub;

 a stem section connected to a distal end of said shaft, said stem section comprising one or more openings formed in a sidewall of said stem section; and

 a distal tip section attached to a distal end of said stem section, said distal tip section including a small opening, said small opening comprising an elastic restrictor that, when operable, changes in size in response to a change in fluid flow through said catheter assembly to provide a variable amount of fluid force restriction ~~based upon a fluid flow rate through said catheter assembly~~, such that forces resulting from fluid flow out of said openings in said stem section and out of said elastic restrictor are substantially balanced.

37. (Previously presented) The catheter assembly of claim 36, wherein said openings of said stem section are holes.

38. (Previously presented) The catheter assembly of claim 36, wherein said openings of said stem section are angled toward the proximal end of said catheter.

39. (Previously presented) The catheter assembly of claim 38, wherein said openings of said stem section cause fluid exiting an internal lumen of said catheter to flow in a retrograde direction to a fluid stream.

40. (Previously presented) The catheter assembly of claim 36, wherein said openings of said stem section and said small opening of said distal tip section are configured to provide a cumulative, substantially zero fluid-force vector in all directions.

41. (Previously presented) The catheter assembly of claim 36, wherein a quantity, size and arrangement of said openings in said stem section and said small opening of said distal tip section provide proper balancing of distal and lateral forces created by a forward and rearward

motion, respectively, of fluid as it flows out from an internal lumen and exits said openings of said catheter.

42. (Previously presented) The catheter assembly of claim 36, wherein said catheter assembly has a maximum external diameter of about 4 French.

43. (New) The catheter of claim 17, wherein the elastic restrictor, when operable, increases in size in response to an increase in fluid flow through the tubular structure.

44. (New) The catheter assembly of claim 36, wherein the elastic restrictor, when operable, increases in size in response to an increase in fluid flow through said catheter assembly.